

REMARKS

This response is submitted in reply to the Official Action mailed January 20, 2004, which requires an election of one of the following patentably distinct species:

- (1) the embodiments of FIGS. 3A - 3D and 4 (Species A);
- (2) the embodiments of FIGS. 5A - 5C and 6 (Species B); or
- (3) the embodiments of FIGS. 7A - 7D and 8 (Species C).

Applicants hereby elect the species of FIGS. 5A - 5C and 6 (Species B) without traverse and respectfully request substantive examination of Claims 14 - 26, which read on the embodiments of FIGS. 5A - 5C and 6. Applicants agree that unpatentability of claims directed to the embodiments of Species A and/or Species C would not necessarily imply unpatentability of claims directed to the embodiments of Species B. Accordingly, Applicants are making this election without traverse. Claims 1 - 13 and 27 - 41 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

If any extension of time for the accompanying response or submission is required, Applicants request that this be considered a petition therefor. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fee that may be required or credit any refund to our Deposit Account No. 50-0220.

Respectfully submitted,

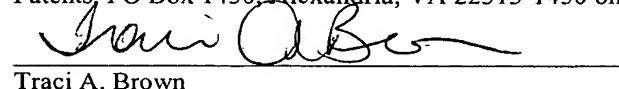


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Non-Fee Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on February 17, 2004.



Traci A. Brown